



City of San Diego

Establishing Salaries for Elected Officials

Office of the Independent Budget Analyst



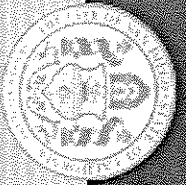
San Diego's Salary Setting Method

- A vote of the Council sets salaries for the Mayor and Council
- Recommendations by the Salary Setting Commission are considered and can either be adopted in-full or a lesser amount by the Council
- The City Council has not voted for a raise in four years. For FY 2007 the Salary Setting Commission recommended a 0% raise and a 25% raise for FY 2008. The Council voted down the 25% salary increase for FY 2008 this April.



Fundamental Issues with Current Salary Setting Method

1. The political implications and potential conflict of interest in mandating that the Council vote to give itself a raise.
2. The appropriate level of pay to attract potential candidates to elected offices given both the high cost of living in San Diego and the preservation of the spirit of public service as a not-for-profit institution.



IBA Survey

Report 06-21

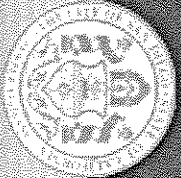
Two common methods of increasing salaries different from San Diego:

- Tie to salaries of superior court judges: increase annually in California by the average percentage salary increase for State employees in the current Fiscal Year (LA and Houston)
- Link to adjustments in the Consumer Price Index (Oakland, San Francisco, Seattle)



Implications of Transition

- If SD tied salaries to the CPI, the City Council would have to approve a base salary, even if this was determined to be current salaries. Therefore, a one-time base salary would have to be voted upon by the Council.
- The current method of salary setting in San Diego could incorporate aspects of the CPI or Superior Court Judge models. The City Charter could be amended so that the Salary Setting Commission reviews and makes recommendations on the base salary every 5 years, but year to year increases could be determined based on the CPI model or the average percentage salary increase for CA State employees in the current Fiscal Year (Similar to model found in San Francisco).



City Attorney Salary Setting

Method in San Diego:

- Set by the City Council per Charter §40

Method in other Mayor-Council cities with elected

City Attorneys:

- Oakland and Seattle: Set by Council
- Los Angeles: Tied to the salary of Council members, with a 20% increase
- San Francisco: Set by Civil Service Commission based on average salaries of City Attorneys in comparable California cities every five years, increases with CPI in interim



Conclusion

- Objective salary setting processes may help remove the salary setting from the political arena and relieve angst about conflicts of interest
- A more objective measure of setting a base salary, along with increases, may ensure that elected offices in San Diego remain attractive to qualified candidates, while ensuring that the salaries of elected officials remain in-line with industry standards.